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The President's Daily Brief

May 25, 1974

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

May 25, 1974

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Soviet

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Page 1.

Fighting flared on the Golan front yesterday, as Israeli and Syrian aircraft attacked targets along the battle lines. (Page 3)

The Indian nuclear test has aroused deep concern in the International Atomic Energy Agency over the viability of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Agency's safeguards program. (Page 4)

The Soviets are apparently seeking to suggest to Peking that Moscow will get tough if its helicopter crew is not returned soon. (Page 5)

Soviet

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Greece's dispute with Turkey over oil exploration rights in the Aegean Sea continues to simmer. (Page 7)

In Argentina, a successful anti-guerrilla sweep by security forces has given the government its first significant victory against the terrorists. (Page 8)

President Sadat says he has received a letter from Brezhnev putting relations on a more "positive" track, but there is still no sign that Moscow has resumed arms shipments to Egypt. (Page 9)

President Marcos has sent an emissary to Taipei to prepare the Nationalists for the eventual establishment of Philippine diplomatic relations with Peking. (Page 9)

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

USSR

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ISRAEL-SYRIA

Fighting flared on the Golan front yesterday, as Israeli and Syrian aircraft attacked targets along the battle lines. Tel Aviv reported that its planes attacked Syrian targets south of the Israeli-held salient into Syria. Damascus stated that its aircraft struck Israeli concentrations in the central sector of the front.

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Ground fighting on the front also picked up from the low level of the past week. Israeli and Syrian forces exchanged tank, artillery, and mortar fire in several sectors of the front, including the area near Mount Hermon.

NPT

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Last week's Indian nuclear test has aroused deep concern in the International Atomic Energy Agency over the viability of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the safeguards program which the IAEA enforces.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The Indian test may at least inhibit, if not prevent, new accessions to the treaty. It may also raise doubts in those countries already parties to the treaty about its value, particularly when so little progress has been made toward complete nuclear disarmament by the super powers.

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If support for the NPT falters, Ecklund continued, so will the whole safeguards program, the real political basis for the Agency's existence.

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USSR

Moscow seems to be sending the Chinese a message that it will get tough unless Peking releases the Soviet helicopter crew. Mikhail Kapitsa, the Soviet foreign ministry's leading expert on China, claimed to Ambassador Stoessel that the Chinese were parading the helicopter crew through Chinese towns and might give them a public trial. He implied that the Soviets might attempt to get the crewmen back by referring to the possibility that the Soviets might find a Chinese helicopter that strayed into Soviet territory.

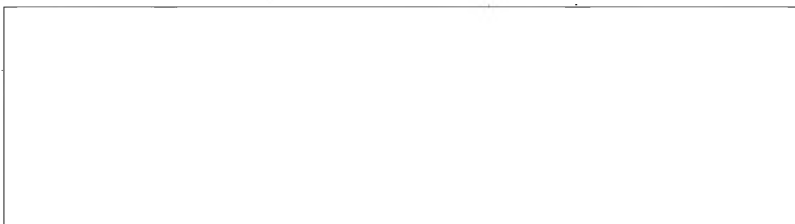
This is the first time the Soviets have made such a threat, although the unusual activity of Soviet helicopters along the border in late April was probably intended to make the Chinese think about such a possibility.

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The Soviets probably are discussing these issues with diplomats in the expectation that the message will get back to Peking. Kapitsa's remarks seem to betray the Soviets' frustration about their inability to settle the helicopter incident in a way that will save face and avoid a major incident. Although it is possible that the Soviets may do something out of such a sense of frustration, it seems more likely that they realize that any direct action against the Chinese would probably not yield the desired results.

USSR



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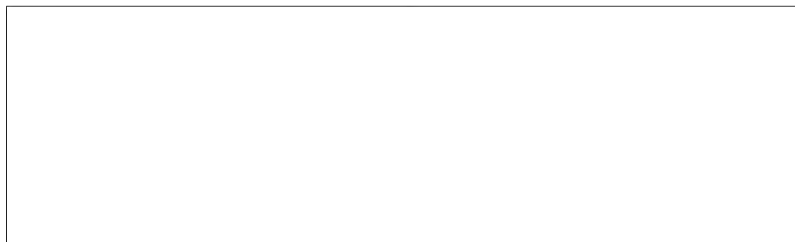
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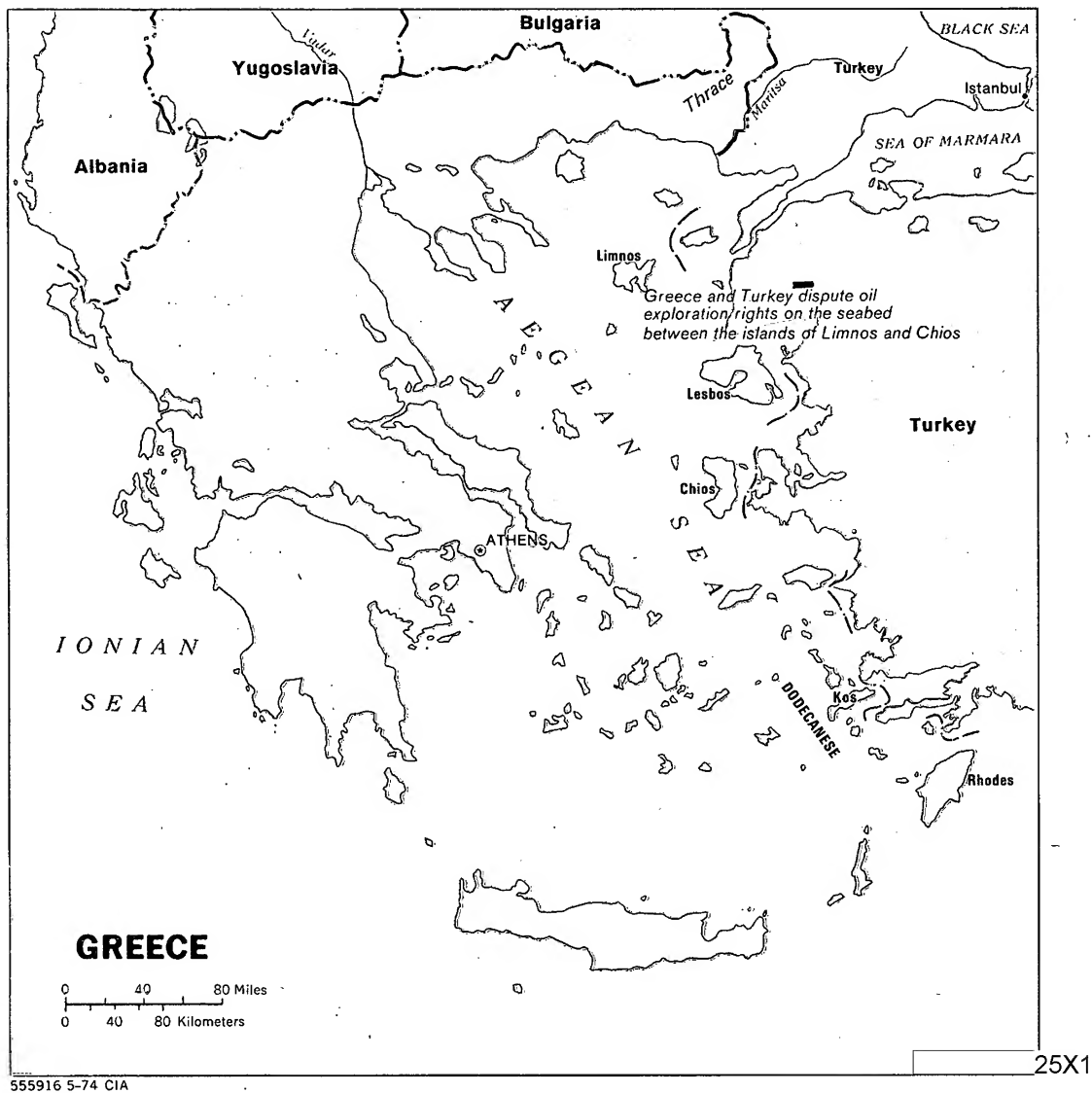
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GREECE-TURKEY

Greece's dispute with Turkey over oil exploration rights in the Aegean Sea continues to simmer. Athens' latest move is to send small artillery contingents to several islands in the eastern Aegean. This follows earlier reports of reinforcement of Greek forces along the border in Thrace. Greek leaders, both military and political, have accompanied these military preparations with statements that Athens will not initiate hostilities, but will as a last resort fight for its rights to sovereignty in the area.

US Ambassador Tasca was informed on May 21 by a source close to Greece's military leadership that his "friends" believe that all Aegean problems with Ankara are negotiable. The source indicated that the Law of the Sea conference in June is the place to resolve the issue. Although the Greeks appear to believe that delegates to the conference will lend support to their position and thus force the Turks to back off, they clearly are preparing contingency plans for the Aegean area should Ankara take "overt action against Greek interests," i.e., begin exploratory drilling.

Turkey has so far played the dispute in a lower key and has asked Athens to discuss the issue. However, this week both the foreign and defense ministers restated in general terms Ankara's intention to safeguard its rights in the area.

ARGENTINA

A successful anti-guerrilla sweep by government security forces in Tucuman Province, begun on May 18-19, has given the Peron government its first significant victory in its counterterrorist offensive.

The large-scale operation, spearheaded by the federal police, reportedly uncovered a major training camp used by the Marxist People's Revolutionary Army. [redacted] a number of prominent terrorists were captured, and many weapons and documents were confiscated. A massive search is continuing, probably in an effort to round up other extremist leaders reported in the area.

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The participation of armed forces units, as well as provincial and border police, suggests that Peron's pressure to mount a coordinated drive is netting results. While a larger role for the military could improve the government's chances of neutralizing the terrorists, the struggle is expected to be a long one.

Meanwhile, a source within the Peronist-controlled labor movement told the US embassy in Buenos Aires that Peron is expected to give the nod soon to plans by militant labor unionists to move against left-wing extremists. The source added that preparations are under way to identify leftist "targets" and that actions against them would be "bloody." Implementation of these plans may coincide with Peron's planned departure for Europe. His absence would permit him to avoid close identification with repressive measures that are likely to evoke strong opposition in Argentina.

NOTES

USSR-Egypt: There is no evidence that Moscow has resumed arms deliveries to Egypt. The last sea-borne arms delivery was on April 13.

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A resumption of some military shipments would jibe with President Sadat's announcement earlier this week that he had received a letter from Brezhnev that put relations on a more "positive" track.

Philippines-China-Taiwan: President Marcos has dispatched a special emissary to Taipei to prepare the Nationalists for the eventual establishment of Philippine diplomatic relations with Peking. Marcos hopes to minimize the deterioration of relations with Taipei, with which Manila has long-standing economic and security relationships. No date for the start of negotiations with Peking has apparently been set, and the discussions will probably be prolonged.

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